

Chapter 6: Resources

I. Introduction

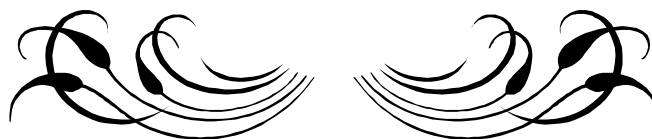
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INTRODUCTION

The underlying premise for establishing standards for library media center holdings is to help local schools provide students and teachers with optimal access to information. The best access enables effective and efficient learning, teaching, and facilitation. The strength of a library media program is partially determined by the availability of quality resources in all formats; however, this does not alleviate the need for printed resources which reflect greater depth and scholarship. Balance among and integration of traditional and electronic resources provide an optimal information environment. Resources are not limited to print, nonprint, machine-dependent, and electronic formats within the building; information accessible from remote sites is also included.

Reading, supported by all resource formats, is the foundation for a student's educational success. Books continue to constitute the major holdings within library media centers. Each school library media center must provide enough reference, nonfiction, and fiction books, supplemented by other formats, to meet the point-of-need demands of its users. According to Krashen in *The Power of Reading*,

“Voluntary reading is the best predictor of reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, spelling ability, grammatical usage, and writing style.” He also states, “The research supports the commonsense view that when books are readily available, when the print environment is rich, more reading is being done.”
(Krashen, 33)

The success of students participating in resource-based learning and accessing technological information is enhanced by the skills developed through free voluntary reading.

The use of technologies is an essential component of the educational process and an

integral part of an effective library media program. Current and emerging technologies are invaluable when meeting the informational needs of students, faculty, and the local community. To encourage visual and listening literacy and to enhance teaching and learning a wide range of formats in all subject areas should be available for group and individual use. Students and teachers need access to a variety of aural, visual and tactile resources to meet their learning styles and information needs. Because of the evolving nature of computerized technologies in numerous formats, care must be exerted to provide both current and retrospective information with valid intellectual content (e.g., quality, authority, currency) that supports, enhances, and enriches the curriculum. Computerized technologies can provide rapid access and excellent indexing.

RESOURCES

The seamless integration of resources in all formats facilitates the retrieval of information that meets a variety of learning styles and information needs. The integration of these formats may require variation from traditional storage methods. To ensure that library media center collections are of quality, as well as quantity, standards for resources in Missouri were revised. A complete explanation of these Standards can be found in the *Standards For Missouri School Library Media Centers*, 1997.

■ Reference

Reference collections in print and electronic formats at all grade levels should deemphasize multivolume general reference encyclopedias and focus on subject-related reference resources such as field guides, travel guides, collective biographies, procedure manuals, almanacs, general dictionaries and specialized dictionaries and encyclopedias, geographical resources, directories, and bibliographies.

■ **Nonfiction**

The nonfiction collection, including print, electronic, and audio and video formats, complemented by the reference collection and other holdings, provides information that:

- supports research;
- enhances and enriches the curriculum;
- encourages student hobbies and personal interests;
- motivates students to seek information; and
- incites curiosity and encourages readers to develop new interests.

■ **Fiction**

Fiction materials contribute substantially to developing vocabulary, reading comprehension, and broadening students' interests and backgrounds. Audio formats of fiction and non-fiction aid the learner's pronunciation, vocabulary development, speech inflection and other verbal skills, and general appreciation of literature. Reading promotion activities and programs in the school impact the development of the fiction collection. The appropriateness of fiction resources can best be determined by local need.

■ **Periodicals**

As major sources of current information, periodicals including magazines, journals, newspapers, and newsletters provide seasonal literature, learning activities projects, news, opinions, suggestions for teaching, and other curricular and motivational information. Periodicals can also fulfill the recreational reading needs of students and serve as a stimulus which leads to other resources. Every school library media center needs at least one multiperiodical index. A majority of the magazines in hard copy in the collection should be included in the index(es) to which the library media center subscribes. Magazines should be saved and organized to permit use of retrospective issues and available indexes.

In addition to the local school periodical collection, electronic access to appropriate remote databases is expected. An appropriate number of workstations to access electronic indexes and periodical resources are necessary to insure quality access to information for students and faculty. These workstations should be in the library media center as well as throughout the building.

■ **Visual and Tactile**

The curriculum-oriented library media center is expected to provide a variety of quality materials in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of its users. Machine-independent visual and tactile resources include such resources as posters, charts, maps and globes, dioramas, statuary, art prints, games, models, and realia.

Information is also available in a wide range of machine-dependent resources that may depict motion or static images and are frequently accompanied by audio tracks. This category might include such resources as compact discs-interactive (CD-i), laser discs, slides, videocassettes, and filmstrips. Visual and tactile resources should be viewed as just one aspect of an integrated library collection.

Quality visual instructional materials may be produced locally if the facilities, equipment, supplies, knowledgeable personnel, and time permit. To be incorporated into a collection and counted toward meeting standards, such instructional items must be carefully evaluated with the same criteria that are used for commercially distributed material.

All audiovisual materials should be organized and cataloged by Dewey classification and should adhere to the same copyright-sensitive guidelines as print resources.

■ **Electronic**

A comprehensive library media center collection includes a variety of electronic resources (e.g., electronic catalog and circulation systems, telecommunication capabilities, the Internet, full/partial text

CD-ROMs). It is imperative that electronic resources are seamlessly integrated with other resource formats to facilitate the learning process. The successful integration of electronic resources requires that students and faculty have readily accessible local and remote information workstations available to them throughout the building. In addition, a sufficient number is needed in the library media center to accommodate the research needs of students and faculty.

A progressive electronic environment:

- includes an electronic catalog and circulation system which facilitates efficient information retrieval and school library media center management;
- encompasses local area networks (LANs) and wide area networks (WANs);
- provides a sufficient number of workstations in the LMC for students to readily access information; and
- enables students and faculty, using a variety of resources and equipment, to creatively design, produce, and evaluate products such as multimedia presentations, visual presentations, and audio presentations.

■ Professional Collection

Professional collections support and encourage professional growth at all grade levels and in all subject areas. Journals, professional periodicals, and other professional items:

- report educational trends and developments;
- suggest teaching techniques, activities, and strategies; and
- report research in general and specialized fields.

The school library media center is the clearinghouse for the acquisition of professional materials regardless of the source of the funds. Faculty members need access to grade-level or subject-area resources as well as those of a generic nature. Although curriculum guides do not count toward meeting standards for the professional collection, at least one copy of all district curriculum guides and other publications appropriate to programs within the school should be available in the library media center. It is the school library media specialist's responsibility to monitor the need for and provide access to professional books, journals, newsletters, machine-dependent, and electronically-stored information that enable informal professional growth and support the faculty's formal education.

■ Selection Tools

Accountability demands that the materials added to the collection have positive reviews and are previewed when feasible. The more limited the budget, the greater the necessity for careful selection before purchase. Sharing selection aids within the district is encouraged; however, it is imperative that each building subscribe to at least one periodical that includes reviews of print, nonprint, and electronic materials in various formats and is appropriate for the age/grade range of users. Subscriptions to multiple selection-oriented periodicals are highly recommended.

Additionally, every library media center should have current "core collection" tools such as one of the H.W. Wilson catalogs (*Children's Catalog*, *The Middle and Junior High School Library Catalog*, or *Senior High School Library Catalog*) or Brodart's *The Elementary School Library Collection: A Guide to Books and Other Media, Phases 1-2-3*.

Criteria For Evaluation of Selection Tools

- How often is the selection tool published?
- Is the tool appropriate for the ages/grades for which materials are selected?
- Is the ratio of reviews appropriate for the ages/grades served by LMC?
- What is the cost of the tool in relation to anticipated use?
- Does the tool include various formats (print, nonprint, electronic)?
- Are reviewing policies included in the publication at least annually?
- Are reviews included in reputable indexes?
- Does it include a “How to Use Guide?”
- Is it arranged for easy use (by subject, by age or grade level, by format)?
- Who writes reviews (professional reviewers, practicing librarians and teachers, subject specialists, library educators)?
- Do the reviews compare the item with other books, videos, etc?
- Do the reviews provide citations to other reviews ?
- What information is generally included in the review?
- Do the reviews include purchasing information (ISBN, type of binding, price)?
- Do reviews include weaknesses and strengths of the item?

The integration of machine-dependent resources requires a knowledge of hardware; thus, periodicals that review and discuss hardware capabilities should also be among the selection tools (e.g., *Media and Methods*, *Electronic Learning*, *Technology Connection*).

■ Equipment

The use of machine-dependent visual and audio resources to enhance instruction and support varied learning styles requires the purchase, circulation, storage, and maintenance of a variety of hardware. Decentralized versus centralized storage and distribution will impact storage space and the daily routine of the library media staff. The library media specialist has the shared responsibility of selecting the most appropriate hardware in numbers to support the demand. (See Chapter 8 for suggested production and audio visual equipment). Issues that need to be considered include:

- sharing budget needs to support new or expanded technologies (e.g., purchase, repair, duplication);
- developing long- and short-range planning for purchases to support new software/audio visual resources;
- providing inservice training for staff and students;
- developing a rotating replacement schedule; and
- purchasing quality and compatible equipment.

The library media specialist should not be expected to be the sole technology expert in the building. A close working relationship must be developed with the district’s technology coordinator to ensure that uniform standards for technology (e.g., quality and access capabilities) and expanded services to faculty and students are in place.

■ Central Library Services

Some districts provide additional funds, services, and materials in central locations that are readily accessible to building-level personnel. Cooperative approaches can be a major asset to a district. For example,

- Memberships in video consortia, for example, can be more economical when shared throughout the district—as long as there is an efficient and expedient delivery service among the buildings to ensure ready access.
- Purchasing resources which can be easily shared throughout the district helps avoid unnecessary duplication of materials and maximizes limited
- Regional networks can enhance services and access to better discounts.
- Interlibrary loans are better facilitated.
- Developing and providing insurance programs is more effective.
- Centralized cataloging ensures uniformity of records.

Although the use of visual, as well as print materials available through central district collections and memberships in consortia is positively recognized, items housed in off-site locations do not replace the need for quality building level collections which are immediately available at the point-of-need and are more likely to support spontaneous instructional and learning needs.

COLLECTION ANALYSIS, EVALUATION, AND DEVELOPMENT

■ Guiding Principles

It is a challenge for the school library media specialist to develop a collection of resources that meets the range of learner and teacher diversities. A broad spectrum of materials in a wide range of formats must be provided to address the needs and interests of:

- varied student populations;
- students with special needs such as learning difficulties, cultural challenges, physical challenges, and other individual or group diversity characteristics;
- students' learning styles; and
- faculty with diverse teaching styles.

Although no one library media center or school district can meet all the needs of all its users, a basic core collection of timely and relevant information resources are essential in every building's library media collection.

■ Collection Development/Selection Policy

A board-adopted collection development / selection policy establishes parameters and guidelines consistent with the district's mission. The policy must be sufficiently generic to apply to all grade levels; yet, it must be specific enough to reflect the values implied or articulated in the mission statement. The district policy is a legally binding document. Building level guidelines or rules may also be developed as long as they do not conflict with the district policy. (See Components of a Selection and Acquisition Policy in Appendix H)

In order to reflect the district's and the school's mission and goals, collections must be supplemented with interlibrary loan and access to remote resources.

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Fundamental principles in collection development include:

- systematic collection analysis to determine age, maturity/comprehension congruence, curriculum relevance, and collection strengths and weaknesses;
- consistency with the local school board's adopted "Collection Development Selection Policy," "Access Policy," "Copyright Policy," "Confidentiality Policy," and other relevant local policies;
- efficient collection analysis enabled by an electronic catalog containing a MARC bibliographic record for each item;
- objectivity of material-selection based on need, timeliness, curriculum relevance, and grade and maturity levels of users rather than responses to pressure groups or individual biases;
- balance in terms of ideologies, formats, curricular needs, and user interests;
- consideration of accessibility to timely, relevant information at local and remote sites and the feasibility of interlibrary loan and other resource-sharing processes;
- selection from reputable reviewing tools or hands-on preview or evaluation;
- selection of quality resources over quantity; and
- collection development as a cooperative process among faculty and students as directed by the LMS.

■ Collection Balance

Balance implies distribution of information resources among formats, user characteristics, units within the curriculum, and extracurricular activities. Balance requires thoughtful attention because:

- per unit cost of items varies among subject areas and formats;
- demand fluctuates within short time frames because of teaching strategies, student demographics, emerging issues in society, and changing curriculum; and
- access to off-site information resources varies.

No one resource replaces the need for another. A goal to have a seamless environment which integrates a variety of resources in a variety of formats which addresses the needs of the user is important and necessary. Various learning styles and reading levels should be carefully considered when purchasing resources. Balance should be foremost in the planning, selecting, and purchasing processes.

■ Remote Access

No library, district, or community can accommodate all demands for information. It is the library media specialist's responsibility to help students and teachers access remote sites and understand the nature and unique characteristics of various information delivery systems whether information is from the district's resource center, the co-op in the adjoining county, an academic library in a nearby state, or a Web site in Europe.

■ Collection Analysis and Evaluation

Collection analysis is a process of determining strengths and weaknesses in the library media collection. The quality of the collection can be determined by identifying evaluation criteria and comparing the holdings of the collection to the criteria. Minimum numbers to determine basic collection sizes in all types of libraries have been advanced for many years. Experts have expressed concern about both the quantity and quality of reading, listening, and viewing materials available to students in library media centers. Quantity alone is misleading; the quality of the collection is a more accurate measure of the collection's response to user needs.

Copyright date is one dimension by which library media specialists can determine the quality of the collection; however, copyright dates as determinants of quality vary from subject to subject and from topic to topic within broad subject categories. It is the responsibility of the school library media specialist to regularly and systematically analyze holdings based on other quality dimensions, such as curriculum fit, reading level, maturity appropriateness, and other variables appropriate to the local school. Ultimately, it is the school library media specialist, working with faculty and administrators, who determines the quality of the collection based on locally perceived needs.

Most electronic catalogs reduce the labor involved in collection analysis. The electronic catalog software permits rapid searching of specified fields and can generate reports, which can then be analyzed by the library media specialist. Such reports might include numbers and formats of resources by Dewey Decimal classifications, by subject terms, and by locally entered data such as reading level. If non-print, electronic, and periodical records are in the electronic catalog, the analysis will be more comprehensive than if only books are entered.

Responsible collection analysis implies:

- adhering to district and/or building level selection policies;
- reviewing current selection tools;
- recognizing curriculum content, teacher expectations, and teaching styles;
- analyzing resources according to content, currency, accuracy, various points of view, ideologies, appeal to user learning styles, reading levels, ease of use, and other variables;
- assessing community resources (other libraries, databases, archives, museums, persons, etc.); and
- assessing external resources (online sources, distance education opportunities, interlibrary loan, etc.).

Collection analysis can be used to develop long- and short-range collection development goals, identify appropriate curriculum support materials, and to develop and justify funding needs. (See sample Collection Evaluation Matrix in Appendix E and G)

■ Replacement Cycles

Budgets are developed for individual schools and must be congruent with the school's and the library media center's mission and goals. The indicators of quality recommended in the Missouri School Improvement Program for library media centers are an excellent starting point.

The following sample replacement cycles are adapted and revised to help plan for replacement and maintenance in Missouri's school library media centers. The following set of guidelines does not mean that every item will be replaced within a given time frame; but, in general, they can be used to define cycles and estimate budget considerations. (Buckingham)

Replacement Cycles

- Maintain the circulating non-fiction collection on a 12-year cycle.
- Maintain the professional collection on an 12-year cycle.
- Maintain general reference encyclopedias on a 5-year cycle.
- Maintain the paperback collection on a 2-year cycle.
- Maintain the microcomputer software collection on a 4-year cycle.
- Maintain standing orders/renewals on a 2-year review of titles.
- Maintain visuals on a 12-year replacement cycle.
- Maintain equipment on a predetermined life expectancy plan.

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